

TRANSPORTATION Enhancement PROGRAM

The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 introduced the Transportation Enhancement Program. The establishment of this program offered broad opportunities and federal dollars to undertake unique and creative actions to integrate transportation into our communities and environment.

In 1998, the tradition of this program was continued by the enactment of the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21). As a result, VDOT will continue to receive applications and fund projects annually until this act expires in 2003.

The following information explains this program and the selection process VDOT is using. The final decision on project selection and funding rests with the Commonwealth Transportation Board. If you have a project that appears to meet the criteria of the enhancement program, please contact us for an application packet. Contact information is listed at the end of this brochure.

Virginia's Transportation Enhancement Program

The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 opened a new era in transportation legislation. With this Act, Congress provided the states increased flexibility to manage their transportation programs. ISTEA gave all levels of government and the private sector the opportunity to work together to plan and develop intermodal transportation systems tailored to their specific needs. An intermodal transportation system is one in which various forms of transportation are integrated and interconnected.

On June 9, 1998, President Clinton signed into law PL 105-178, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorizing highway, highway safety transit and other surface transportation programs for the next six years. TEA-21 builds on the initiatives established by ISTEA. This new Act combines the continuation and improvement of current programs with new initiatives to meet the challenges of enhancing communities and the natural environment as we provide transportation, and advancing America's economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation. Ten percent of each state's Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, one element of the entire funding program are set aside for enhancements. In Virginia, this amounts to about \$18.5 million a year through 2003. By federal law, these funds must be used for transportation enhancements and for no other purpose.

Transportation enhancement activities can be a stand-alone project or can be implemented as part of an on-going larger transportation project. In either case, it must relate to the intermodal surface transportation system in function, proximity or impact. For example, an independent bike path is a functional component of the Intermodal transportation system. Removal of outdoor advertising in the viewshed of a highway is justified in light of its proximity. Retrofitting an existing highway by creating a wetland to filter runoff from the highway would qualify based on the impact of the highway in terms of water pollution.

Transportation enhancement activities are activities or improvements, which increase the value or worth of a project or make it more aesthetically pleasing. They should provide a "quality-of-life" benefit. A project is "enhanced" by doing something that is not a common practice.

Eligible Enhancement Categories

Transportation enhancement activities must fall into one or more of the following 12 categories as defined by federal legislation:

1. Provision of Facilities for Bicycles and/or Pedestrians

This category includes projects for bicyclists and pedestrians beyond or in addition to what is necessary for safe accommodation. This includes activities that enhance the transportation system through more aesthetic routing or design or improving existing facilities to make them more usable for pedestrians and bicyclists. Projects must relate to the transportation function; those that are solely recreational are not eligible for funding. Examples of projects include: acquisition, development and construction of separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities on or off road rights-of-way or in relation to transit facilities; widening curb lanes or re-striping to create wider curb lanes, paving shoulders and providing access to public transit; bicycle lockers at rail stations; bus depots, airports, recreation facilities; and bikeways or pedestrian paths which separate these modes of travel from the motorized transportation system.

Activities are not eligible where they are conducted as an incidental part of new transportation projects to accommodate routine use by pedestrians and bicycles. This could include provision of sidewalks, wide curb lanes, required curb ramps and paved shoulders.

2. Provision of Safety and Educational

Activities for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

This category was added under the TEA-21 legislation and includes the development of programs and educational material to insure for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Activities that would be eligible include classroom type programs to instruct bicyclists and drivers on the safe operation of bike facilities and equipment. This would also include the development of educational and safety handouts or pamphlets. In addition directional signage that would provide the bicyclist or pedestrian with trail information is an acceptable activity under this category.

Funds cannot be used to develop programs such as police bike patrols that would normally be the responsibility of the jurisdiction.

3. Acquisition of Scenic Easements and Scenic or Historic Sites

This category may be applied to the purchase, donation, transfer or trade of lands which possess significant aesthetic, historic, natural visual or open space values, including land and property listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Funds may be used for planning and transaction costs including appraisals, surveys, legal costs or purchase costs. Funds may only be used where the applicant agrees to enforce appropriate mechanisms to preserve the significant scenic and historic values.

Examples of projects include: acquisition of a scenic easement, scenic site or historic site that enhances the transportation experience; acquisition of a historic bridge, transportation terminal, land around a historic site adjacent to a scenic highway.

Examples of where funds cannot be used are for access roads to historic sites, land acquisition where future development may degrade the scenic character, and land purchased to protect an internal viewshed.

4. Scenic or Historic Highway Programs *(including the Provision of Tourist and Welcome Centers)*

This category covers protection and enhancement of state or federally designated scenic or historic highways. Funds may be used only for projects that will protect and enhance the scenic, historic, cultural, natural and archaeological integrity and visitor appreciation of an existing highway and adjacent area, or for planning, design and development of new state scenic byway programs. Byways are roads that have met the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation standards for designation as a byway. Typically these roads must meet the standards of high aesthetic or cultural value and lead to or are within areas of historical, natural or recreational significance. The designations are made in cooperation with local governments.

Examples of projects include: interpretive plaques or restoration of historic lighting standards; historic aesthetic treatment on retaining walls and guardrails; aesthetically pleasing bridge rails for use on scenic highways or in areas of high visual sensitivity. The construction of new facilities or restoration of existing buildings to house tourist and welcome centers are eligible under this category. These facilities do not have to be on a designated scenic or historic byway, but there must be a clear link to scenic or historic sites. The standards for these centers should meet the criteria as established by the Virginia Tourism Corporation. For copies of these standards please contact the Transportation Enhancement Program Staff.

Eligible projects do not include construction of safety rest areas, additional lanes or new scenic or historic highways. Staffing, operating or maintenance of existing or new tourist and welcome centers is not eligible.

5. Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification

This category includes landscape planning, design and construction projects, which enhance the aesthetic or ecological resources along transportation corridors, points of access, and lands qualifying for other categories of transportation enhancement activities.

Projects, which enhance the aesthetic resources or beauty of a transportation project, include planning, design and construction of scenic vistas and overlooks, restoration of historic landscapes and construction of landscapes, which are compatible with their surroundings. Projects which enhance the ecological balance along a transportation corridor include planning, testing and planting for restoration or re-introduction of native plant communities and appropriate adaptive species, and the provision of interpretive information about the federal and state agency programs through which ecological resources are preserved.

Examples of projects include: "gateway " plantings to communities; landscaping transplants to move trees outside of clear zones and into more attractive, safer locations; retrofitting existing noise barriers with landscaping; replacement of a utilitarian bridge with one of appropriate architectural qualities in a setting which calls for more than a utilitarian design; roadside ecological viewing areas and development of aesthetically pleasing bridge rails.

Funds may not be used for routine, incidental or maintenance activities such as grass cutting, tree pruning and removal, soil stabilization, construction of noise barriers, drainage improvements or post-construction finish work such as replanting and re-seeding. No funds may be used to remove trees unless there is an approved site plan which calls for such removal on the grounds of scenic or ecological enhancement, or unless a tree is diseased or dead and certified by a qualified professional.

6. Historic Preservation

Projects in this category should enhance the transportation system by improving the ability of the public to appreciate the historical significance of the project itself or the area to be served by the project. Projects must relate to the intermodal transportation system; those historical preservation projects, which do not relate to the intermodal transportation system by functional proximity or impact, are not eligible for funding.

Funds may be used for the identification, evaluation, recordation, documentation, curation, acquisition, protection, rehabilitation, interpretation, restoration and stabilization or any combination of the foregoing, of any historic district, site, building, structure, landscape or object (and any artifacts and records related to it) included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, or a contributor to a National Register Historic District, or a local landmark or contributing resource within a local historic district, designated by a Certified Local Government. A Certified Local Government is one certified by the National Park Service as having a historic preservation program that meets defined federal standards.

Examples of projects include historic buildings that will now serve as a multimodal transportation center, restoration of lighthouses and the stabilization and interpretation of any historic site, including Native American sites, if those sites were discovered as a result of road construction.

Ineligible projects include creation of a non-transportation related museum, maintenance activities, and restoration or replication of any structure not meeting the requirement of being surface transportation related.

7. Rehabilitation and Operation of Historic Transportation Buildings, Structures or Facilities including Historic Railroad Facilities and Canals

Historic transportation buildings are buildings or structures associated with the operation, passenger and freight use, construction or maintenance of any mode of transportation where such building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or a contributor to a National Register Historic District, or a local landmark or contributing resource within a local historic district, designated by a certified local government.

Structures and facilities include tunnels, bridges, trestles, embankments, rails or other guideway, non-operational rolling stock, canal viaducts, tow paths and locks, rail stations, rail depots,

historic inns and taverns, and other manmade transportation facilities integrally related to the operation, passenger, freight use, construction or maintenance of any mode of transportation.

Rehabilitation means the process of returning the property to a state, which makes possible a contemporary use while preserving the significant historic features of the property.

Operation means the provision of access and service in a manner related to both the continuation of a contemporary transportation or non-transportation use consistent with the historic character of the property and open to the general public on a not-for-profit basis.

Funds may not be used for a facility that does not relate to surface transportation or for activities that would be considered normal maintenance.

8. Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors Including the Conversion and Use Thereof for Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails

This category includes the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and development of corridors for public uses including bicycle and pedestrian use. It permits the development and rehabilitation of privately owned rail corridors open to the general public without charge.

Rail corridors are those in which fixed rail tracks exist or have existed in the past. Abandoned railway corridors are those which have been authorized for abandonment by the Interstate Commerce Commission, or for which abandonment proceeding are pending before the ICC, or which have been rail banked under any applicable federal or state authority.

This category may not be used for rail preservation.

9. Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising

Expenditures made to remove existing signs; displays and devices are eligible. Acquisition must comply with a legal process that bases payment on an equitable appraisal.

Priority should be given to the removal of outdoor advertising signs in conjunction with other transportation enhancement activities.

Eligible activities include the compilation of an inventory of nonconforming outdoor advertising displays.

Billboards listed under the Virginia's Department of Transportation's current billboard removal program are not eligible.

10. Archaeological Planning and Research

This category is limited to research on sites eligible for transportation enhancement funds. This includes experimental projects in archaeological site preservation and interpretation; planning to improve identification, evaluation and treatment of archaeological sites; problem oriented synthesis using data derived from (though not limited to) transportation-related archaeological projects; development of national and regional research designs to guide future surveys; data recovery and synthetic research; and projects having similar purposes carried out in partnership with other federal, state, local and government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Expenditures could be used for research or interpretation of sites associated with transportation facilities and the display of any artifacts recovered as a result of the construction of these facilities.

This category is not for non-transportation related excavations, data entry into GIS systems to accommodate future transportation projects or the construction of museums.

11. Environmental Mitigation to Address Water Pollution Due to Highway Runoff or Reduce Vehicle-caused Wildlife Mortality while Maintaining Habitat Connectivity

This category is for facilities and programs minimizing pollution from stormwater runoff from transportation facilities that are in addition to current requirements. In addition, this category would cover the provision for facilities that would reduce vehicle and wildlife encounters. Acquisition of land without completed plans and fund commitments necessary for a mitigation project and projects that do not maintain habitat connectivity for threatened or endangered species will not be considered for funding.

12. Establishment of Transportation Museums

This category covers the establishment of transportation related museums and includes the purchase or construction of a facility, the establishment of maritime museums and additions to existing transportation museums. The museum must; (1) be a legally organized not-for-profit institution or part of a not-for-profit institution or government-entity; (2) be essentially educational in nature; (3) have a formally stated mission; (4) have one full-time paid professional staff member who has museum experience and is delegated authority and allocated financial resources sufficient to operate the museum effectively; (5) present regularly scheduled programs and exhibits that use and interpret objects for the public according to accepted standards; (6) have a formal and appropriate program of documentation, care and use of collections and/or tangible objects; and (7) have a formal and appropriate program of presentations and maintenance of exhibits.

Activities that would not be eligible include the establishment of aviation museums, purchase of land or budding that is beyond what is needed for the museum, operation costs and maintenance of the facility

Project Funding

Up to 80 percent of a transportation enhancement project can be financed with federal STP funds. A minimum of 20 percent must come from other public or private sources. Some types of federal funds from other Federal Agencies are allowable for the required match. All or part of the 20 percent local match may be an in-kind contribution of tangible property, such as donations of land or materials, if consistent with federal regulations. To the limit allowable under federal law, professional services that are related to the project, and are documentable, may qualify as an in-kind match as does volunteer labor. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will not consider allowing regular interstate, primary, secondary or urban allocations for the local share. Individual project awards will not exceed \$1 million in federal funds per application year.

Applicants may apply for multi-year funding with a single application; however, each phase of the proposed project must be completed within 48 months of the time funds are made available for that phase. The application should not include requests for funds which will not be expended within the time limit.

Multi-phase projects will require submission of applications for subsequent phases. Each proposed project phase should be able to stand upon its own merit, since additional funding is not guaranteed.

If funds are approved, they should be administered through the jurisdiction or agency endorsing the project (a sample project endorsement resolution is found on page 18 of this brochure.) The local government or state agency endorsing the project will be required to sign a project administration agreement and must make all reimbursement requests.

If the applicant decides not to complete a project within the time frame specified within the agreement, VDOT can request reimbursement for all expenditures and any remaining funds will lapse. In addition, the Commonwealth Transportation Board may remove funding from any project at the request of the sponsoring agency or jurisdiction. Jurisdictions or public agencies will be responsible for cost overruns. Applicants will be reimbursed through the local jurisdiction for eligible costs after the project is satisfactory completed or periodically based on a project's progress. It is not required that all elements of a project be eligible in order to be selected. However, if selected, only eligible items will be funded.

Project Submission

Any local government, state agency, group or individual may initiate enhancement projects. Prior to submission, all projects need to be formally endorsed by a local jurisdiction or public agency after conducting a duly advertised public hearing. Projects that are within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area require the endorsement of the appropriate MPO (see attached list of jurisdictions prior to submission.)

If an enhancement project is within Virginia Department of Transportation right of way, the Department, upon request, may administer the project and provide technical and planning assistance. If the project is not within VDOT right of way, the project may be administered by the jurisdiction or agency requesting the project.

On every enhancement project, All Applicable State and Federal Regulations and Guidelines Must Be Followed, including environmental assessments and document, consultant selection, acquisition of land or buildings, construction and procurement standards, contractor selection, reimbursement procedures and regulations, and obtaining of any necessary permits. The project recipient is responsible for completion of these items and the Virginia Department of Transportation staff will be available to provide guidance in these areas.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the sponsoring jurisdiction or agency holds a public hearing prior to project submission.

To submit a project for consideration, please complete the application form, present it to a local jurisdiction or public agency (MPO if necessary) for endorsement, and then submit five copies of the application package to the Virginia Department of Transportation. The address is included in the application packet.

If a state or other public agency endorses an application, it must notify the jurisdiction in which the project is located and give the jurisdiction an opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

Project Selection

The Commonwealth Transportation Board working through its Environmental Committee will do final selection of projects and funding allocations. A scoring committee will assist in the evaluation of projects.

VDOT staff will screen projects based upon the following criteria. These criteria must be satisfied for the application to receive further consideration. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration will be consulted where project eligibility is questionable.

* Meets at least one enhancement category * Relationship to surface transportation Public hearing held MPO endorsement if necessary Endorsement by appropriate governmental jurisdiction or entity including minimum 20% funding match requirement Local government comments if application by some other entity Maximum federal share no more than 80% of eligible items Over and above normal transportation practice

Projects, which meet the screening criteria, will be evaluated by the following:

- ☐ Inclusion in a state, regional, or local plan
- ☐ Public/private venture - cooperation (multi-jurisdictional) Demonstrable need/community improvement Originality and number of enhancement categories Community support/public involvement Public accessibility Compatibility with adjacent land use
- ☐ Environmental/air quality/ecological benefits
- ☐ Historical value
- ☐ Significant aesthetic value to be achieved
- ☐ Impact on community economy and tourism
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Educational
- ☐ Strategy for upkeep and maintenance
- ☐ Relationship to transportation
- ☐ Relationship to a previously funded project

The above criteria are not listed in order of importance.

The Department holds Pre-Allocation hearings in the spring of each year and Final Allocation hearings each June which afford any potential applicants the opportunity to address the Commonwealth Transportation Board relative to their proposed project.

In addition, public workshops are held each fall in all of Virginia's nine construction districts providing information on the Transportation Enhancement Program and the application procedures.

For information about the hearings or workshops, please contact the Transportation Enhancement Program Staff.

Additional information and Assistance

For more information on this program or to obtain a copy of the application packet, please contact our Transportation Enhancement Program Staff, at 1-800-444-7832. In the Richmond area, please call (804) 786-2872 or 786-2264.

The mailing address is:
Virginia Department of Transportation
Local Assistance Division
Transportation Enhancement Program Staff
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Fax: (804) 786-2603

E-mail: Robert.Terrell@VirginiaDOT.org
H.Chenault@VirginiaDOT.org
Pamela.Liston@VirginiaDOT.org
Cynthia.Clark@VirginiaDOT.org

Project Endorsement Resolution

(SAMPLE)

Whereas, in accordance with Commonwealth Transportation Board construction allocation procedures, it is necessary that a request by resolution be received from the local government or state agency in order that the Virginia Department of Transportation program a transportation enhancement project in the (jurisdiction.).

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the (local jurisdiction or state agency), requests the Commonwealth Transportation Board to establish a project for the improvement of (name/description of project).

Be It Further Resolved, that the (local government or state agency) hereby agrees to pay a minimum 20 percent of the total cost for planning and design, right of way, and construction of this project, and that, if the (jurisdiction or agency) subsequently elects to cancel this project the (jurisdiction or agency) hereby agrees to reimburse the Virginia Department of Transportation for the total amount of costs expended by the Department through the date the Department is notified of such cancellation.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, _____,
_____, Virginia

BY _____ (CEO of jurisdiction/agency)

Attest _____

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Proposed transportation enhancement projects that are within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area require the endorsement of the appropriate MPO.

Contact your local MPO to determine their involvement.

**Kingsport MPO
(423) 229-9414**

- ☐ Kingsport
- ☐ Part of Scott County

**Bristol MPO
(423) 989-5519**

- ☐ Bristol
- ☐ Part of Washington County

Charlottesville/Albemarle MPO (804) 979-7310

- ☐ Charlottesville
- ☐ Part of Albemarle County

**Danville MPO
(540) 638-3987**

- ☐ Danville
- ☐ Part of Pittsylvania County

**Fredericksburg MPO
(540) 373-2890**

- ☐ Fredericksburg
- ☐ Spotsylvania County
- ☐ Stafford County

**Hampton Roads MPO
(757) 420-8300**

- ☐ Chesapeake
- ☐ Hampton
- ☐ Newport News
- ☐ Norfolk
- ☐ Portsmouth
- ☐ Poquoson
- ☐ Suffolk
- ☐ Virginia Beach
- ☐ Williamsburg
- ☐ James City County
- ☐ York County
- ☐ Part of Gloucester County
- ☐ Part of Isle of Wight County

**Lynchburg MPO
(804) 845-3491**

- ☐ Lynchburg
- ☐ Part of Amherst County
- ☐ Part of Bedford County
- ☐ Part of Campbell County

**Richmond MPO
(804) 358-3684**

- ☐ Richmond
- ☐ Ashland
- ☐ Hanover County
- ☐ Henrico County
- ☐ Most of Chesterfield County
- ☐ Part of Charles City County
- ☐ Part of Goochland County
- ☐ Part of New Kent County
- ☐ Part of Powhatan County

**Roanoke MPO
(540) 343-4417**

- ☐ Roanoke
- ☐ Salem
- ☐ Vinton
- ☐ Part of Botetourt County
- ☐ Part of Roanoke County

**Tri-Cities MPO
(804) 861-1666**

- ☐ Colonial Heights
- ☐ Hopewell
- ☐ Petersburg
- ☐ Part of Chesterfield County
- ☐ Part of Dinwiddie County
- ☐ Part of Prince George County

**National Capital Region
Transportation Planning
Board (202) 962-3310**

- ☐ Alexandria
- ☐ Fairfax
- ☐ Falls Church
- ☐ Manassas
- ☐ Manassas Park
- ☐ Arlington County
- ☐ Fairfax County
- ☐ Loudoun County
- ☐ Prince William County